Preface

While serving as manager of the oral history collection of the Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Barry Fowle discovered a wealth of material for an anthology about the Korean War. Although the Korean War ended more than 50 years ago, little has been written on the important role engineers played in that conflict. Barry began to assemble a history of the Korean War composed almost entirely of engineer officer oral interviews. Through this collection of oral history interviews, today's engineer officers have the opportunity to learn from those who have gone before.

In organizing this anthology, the editors divided the Korean War period into six sections, starting with the North Korean invasion on 25 June 1950 and ending in July 1953, the month the armistice was signed. Each section contains the interviewed officers' experiences during that time period.

The first chapter encompasses the initial period of the war from the attack by North Korea against South Korea on 25 June 1950 and the retreat to the Pusan Perimeter. The second chapter delves into the Inch'on invasion by X Corps on 15 September and the capture of Seoul, Korea. Chapter three begins with the Pusan Perimeter breakout, timed to coincide with the Inch'on landing, and follows Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker's Eighth Army from Pusan to the Yalu, then the long withdrawal south to below Seoul following the Chinese counterattack of November 1950. Chapter four covers a similar period of time when X Corps landed on the east coast of Korea in October and pushed up to the Yalu. The chapter ends when the Chinese attacked in November and X Corps evacuated North Korea from Hungnam in December. Chapter five covers the period of Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway's command, following the death of Gen. Walker in December 1950. Ridgway turned Eighth Army around and again moved north, eventually to the area of the 38th Parallel, while at the same time raising the men's low morale. The last chapter begins with the opening of the peace talks and runs to the end of actual combat two years later on 27 July 1953. Compared to earlier phases of the conflict, much less movement occurred during this final period.

Each Korean War interview presented here has been extracted and edited from a longer "career" oral history transcript. All nonessential items, including the *Q*'s and *A*'s denoting questions and answers, have been removed to smooth the flow of the narrative. If an oral history covers more than one of the six sections, it is divided into separate sections and placed in the

appropriate chapter. The original tapes and unedited transcripts are in the Research Collections of the Office on History. A number of the full career interviews contain restrictions concerning who may see them. Readers interested in seeing any of the career oral histories should first contact the Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Virginia.

This book contains 52 articles, extracted from 26 oral histories and one published memoir. Each interviewee is introduced in the Table of Contents with the rank he held during the Korean War. For certain individuals, the Table of Contents reflects promotions during the war. Many of these officers later achieved senior rank. The Biographies list each interviewee alphabetically, including his final rank. It also includes the name of each interviewer and the date each interview was conducted.

Preparing these interviews for publication required an editorial decision that bears special mention. Several of the oral histories refer to KATUSAs, that is, participants in the Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army program. In other publications, however, readers may also find KATUSA rendered as "Korean Army Training with the U.S. Army," or "Korean Army Troops, U.S. Army."

Racial tensions clearly were present in certain U.S. Army units in Korea and engineer units were not exempt from these frictions. Contemporary readers will note the absence of senior African-American officers among the oral histories. The Army had integrated officer training during World War II. Certainly, the Korean War was a catalyst speeding the further integration of the Army, but senior black officers in Korea still were a rarity. An excerpt from Lt. Col. Charles M. Bussey's memoir has been included, with the publisher's permission, to afford an African-American's perspective on engineer activities in Korea.

One of the more interesting aspects of this history is the broad spectrum of military engineer experiences covered by the interviewees. Their activities were not necessarily limited to the field of engineering; several officers recounted instances where engineers not only operated under hostile fire, but also actually served as infantry. For example, most engineers in the Pusan Perimeter were put into the defensive line.

The engineer experiences covered in this volume include such activities as road building, repair, and maintenance; bridge building, repair, and maintenance; airfield construction; laying and clearing of minefields; sweeping for mines; building barrier lines; erecting cantonments; and constructing port facilities. Some officers, including Lt. Gen. Garrison H. Davidson, give interesting descriptions of personnel they worked with. Some interviews describe examples of poor leadership. Several other interviews describe inadequacies in training and the need to improvise *ad hoc* solutions as situations arose.

Geography made the role of the engineers especially significant in the Korean War. Korea is extremely mountainous and, as a result, rivers tend to be narrow and rapid. The monsoon season in July and August increased the water flow during the summer and added to the problems of bridging and roadwork. Mountain roads generally were narrow. To handle larger vehicles or trailers with large loads, the engineers had to redesign the roads to eliminate the narrow S-curves. Where front lines existed, roads often did not, and engineers had to carve roads out of solid rock to handle the heavy vehicles a modern army uses to resupply front-line soldiers. Winter ice, floods, and debris on the rivers took out many of the low-level combat bridges, requiring the installation of permanent high-level bridges that would not wash out.

These experiences in cold, rough, mountainous terrain led individuals and groups to use practical experience as a guide to getting work done. For example, training prescribed by the U.S. Army Engineer School called for roads to have no more than a 20 percent grade, but to get the work done rapidly to support the front-line troops, some roads were given a 30 percent grade. Bunkers were pre-cut in the rear, then brought forward where they were dug in, assembled, and covered over.

Another very important area of concern to engineers was supply. Col. Harry Hoskins talks about operating outside of the supply system, that is, in the "black market." Others talk of using the "good old boy network,"—the trading and swapping of goods. Not requisitioning supplies through the system, especially at first, meant that logisticians did not recognize that the material was needed, and subsequently no reservoir of parts and equipment was established. When demands through requisitioning were documented, material often was lost in the supply system. For these reasons the supply system did not work well in Korea. Brig. Gen. Miles Dawson, a logistician, was not in Korea, but was stationed at the Yokohama Depot in Japan. He contributes a very interesting interview on supply support to Korea.

The experiences of these engineer officers provide excellent examples—both good and bad—of how the U.S. Army operated during the war. This volume is not the definitive history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Korea. The engineer interviews of the Korean War provide a valuable history of warfare in a cold, mountainous country, as well as a history of combat where severe supply and equipment problems placed untold hardships on the soldiers and led to an emphasis on field expedients.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from this book is that the engineers, officers and men, are indeed the glue that holds the Army together and makes it go. The Corps of Engineers provides the combat support on the front lines in the form of bridges, ferries, roads, and road maintenance, so that

replacements and logistical support can be provided to the front line. Engineers emplace and remove minefields, build airfields, maintain ports, and provide technical logistical support. The Korean War underscores that perhaps no other branch of the U.S. Army can boast of such a broad and extensive mission in wartime as the Corps of Engineers. *Essayons!*

We would like to offer a few final thoughts about this volume. Barry Fowle was the conceptual father of this book, and he selected representative interviews and organized them into chronological chapters. After Barry retired in 1998, John Lonnquest was appointed co-editor, and in that capacity he reviewed the interviews, selected the photographs, supervised the layout, and oversaw the many other steps necessary to produce this history. Selecting photographs to illustrate this volume was a long but rewarding task, and the editors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Military History Institute, Truman Presidential Library, the Marine Corps Historical Center, and the United States Naval Institute for providing copies of images from their collections. A very special thanks goes to Janet Fisher in the Office of the Command Historian, Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, who patiently and with unfailing good humor scanned dozens of images from their collection for use in this book. Marilyn Hunter, USACE, Office of History, was an advisor on editorial matters in the early stages of preparation but, tragically, did not live to see the final publication. Arnold G. Fisch, Jr., also worked on the manuscript in the early stages; his deft pen helped eliminate the inevitable redundancies that creep into a work such as this, and he also helped craft much of the supporting narrative that puts the interviews into their proper historical context. Our neighbors down the hall, Rich Comiso and Jack O'Neill, of the Army Engineer Association, graciously responded to a steady stream of questions on engineer equipment, terminology, and procedures. Jean Diaz, USACE, Office of History, edited the final manuscript, scanned and prepared images and maps, was instrumental in implementing a standard, cohesive style throughout, and performed many other steps that shepherded this book to its final publication. Our colleague, Bill Baldwin, reviewed the manuscript, and his keen eye caught a number of errors and inconsistencies that our eyes were too tired to see. Jessa Poppenhager, USACE, Office of History, designed the book cover and assisted in scanning and preparing electronic images. Cindy Dyer of Dyer Design handled book design and production. Although we are grateful for their efforts, we alone are responsible for any substantive errors that may appear.

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